

when I was a staff person in the California State Senate and he was an activist attorney fighting for farm workers, the disabled and children. Our close relationship continued when I came to Congress in 1975 and we fought many of the same battles at the Federal level.

Ralph was a valued and creative advisor. Our efforts to enforce reclamation law and end unjustified water subsidies in California's Central Valley laid the groundwork for massive reforms like the Central Valley Project Improvement Act and the Bay-Delta process that, at long last, are rearranging California's water priorities and restore our State's decimated environment.

Ralph was the early leader in the fight against unsafe pesticides that endangered consumers and farm workers, too. His pioneering legal work paved the way for the prohibition of DDT and the protection of groundwater from chemical contamination. His work on behalf of children guaranteed nutrition assistance, educational opportunities and equal access without regard to disability or ethnicity.

For some, I suspect, Ralph Absacal's career was about chasing rainbows. But Ralph caught a fair number of those rainbows, and ours is a far safer, far more just, and far cleaner world because of his tireless efforts.

He stands as a giant in terms of his fight for the poor and the disenfranchised people of America. It is perhaps his greatest legacy that millions of those whose lives will be forever improved by his life's labors never even heard his name, never knew that he spent decades arguing on their behalf in the courtrooms, in the legislative chambers and in the streets.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all Members of the House of Representatives join me in mourning the loss of one of America's great advocates and attorneys, and extend to his widow, Beatrice Moulton, and their daughter Pilar.

RECOGNITION OF R.E. THOMASON GENERAL HOSPITAL

HON. SILVESTRE REYES

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 18, 1997

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to commend R.E. Thomason General Hospital, El Paso's only not-for-profit hospital, for being recognized for the second year in a row as one of America's top performing hospitals, according to the 1996 "100 Top Hospitals—Benchmarks for Success" study. I would like to congratulate R.E. Thomason General Hospital for their dedication to the community and outstanding performance.

The "100 Top Hospitals—Benchmarks for Success" study is conducted annually by HCIA, the industry's most comprehensive source of health care information, and the Health Care Provider Consulting practice [HPCP] of William M. Mercer, a leading international management consulting firm. HCIA and Mercer HPCP annually develop a model for high performance among general acute care hospitals in the United States. The model is then used to identify 100 of the top performing hospitals on key measures related to clinical practices, operations, and financial management. Mercer HPCP and HCIA undertake this study each year to establish industry

benchmarks in the context of a rapidly and constantly changing health care industry and to recognize those hospitals that demonstrate superior performance.

To qualify, hospitals had to rank above their peers on a combination of eight measures that indicate high value through high-quality outcomes, effective use of resources, and efficient provision of care—a balance R.E. Thomason General Hospital has achieved.

I would like to thank R.E. Thomason for their vision and dedication to the community and commend the staff for their devotion to caring for the people of El Paso.

TRIBUTE IN MEMORY OF VIRGIL TRESSENWRITER

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 18, 1997

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Virgil Tresenwriter. Virgil was a native of Beckley, WV, my hometown. In 1995, at the annual dinner of the Beckley/Raleigh County Black Business Association, Virgil's solo performance with the New Gospel Singaleers captured my spirit, leaving me in a state of awe, almost too speechless to deliver my keynote address. It was a profoundly moving experience. And no wonder.

Virgil was ordained by God from the very beginning of his life to sing praises to the Lord. It was a sweet sound and a joy divine—just as the gospel hymn says—to hear the deep baritone voice of Virgil "Pee-Wee" Tresenwriter ring out the heavenly melodies. What a blessing it was to be stirred and moved in your spirit from the sounds that came from the very depths of his heart.

If you were burdened down and sinking, to rise no more, you were lifted up when Pee-Wee sang "His Eyes Are On The Sparrow and I know He Watches Me." Then Virgil would remind you that he loves to praise His name, because He is a rock, a sword, and a shield—He's just a jewel in the middle of a wheel. Virgil's life was a blessing in so many ways to those who knew him, an inspiration to children who imitated him as he performed with the New Gospel Singaleers, with colorful attire reminiscent of the more famous singing groups of older times.

With his God-given talents, it was nothing for Virgil to challenge groups such as the Mighty Clouds of Joy, or the Canton Spirituals, when performing on the same program.

It is with the same pride that I take this opportunity to honor a man who gave the very best of himself, using his God-given talents to inspire, encourage, and lift the hearts of those who knew him. Virgil will be missed immensely, now that he has joined the heavenly choir to sing with the angels of God.

His songs, and the spirit in which he sang them, will sing out in our hearts forever.

TRIBUTE TO HISPANAS ORGANIZED FOR POLITICAL EQUITY (HOPE)

HON. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 18, 1997

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, on Friday, March 14, 1997, Hispanas Organized for Political Equity [HOPE] Education and Leadership Fund's Sixth Annual Symposium is taking place in California's 33d Congressional District during Women's History Month. In honor of this important event on the floor of Congress, I am proclaiming March 14, 1997, as Latina History Day.

The HOPE Education and Leadership Fund is committed to improving the social, political, and economic status of Latinas in their workplace, homes, schools, and community. Historically, HOPE has educated women and the community about domestic violence, the depiction of Latinos in the media, and the need to break the glass ceiling in employment. This year's symposium will address education and the superhighway, violence in our schools, and women's health concerns.

The proclamation of Latina History Day during Women's History Month memorializes the important role Latinas play in American society. It recognizes the work and sacrifices of prior generations, celebrates the growing accomplishments of contemporary Latinas, and lays the foundation for future generations. Organizations like HOPE are critical cornerstones to the educational and leadership training programs we need to meet the challenges of today and the future.

I commend the HOPE Education and Leadership Fund for their commitment to Latinas and our children and, in their honor, proclaim March 14, 1997, as Latina History Day.

INTRODUCTION OF THE SAN TIMOTEO CREEK ASSESSMENT ELIMINATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION ACT OF 1997

HON. JERRY LEWIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 18, 1997

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to join my friend and colleague, Congressman GEORGE BROWN in introducing the San Timoteo Creek Assessment Elimination and Environmental Restoration Act of 1997.

This important legislation will allow the San Timoteo Creek flood control project to move forward while eliminating proposed local assessments. This act will also provide the added flexibility for the local sponsor—County of San Bernardino, to make the project more environmentally sensitive.

Let me briefly explain what this straightforward legislation will accomplish. This bill will allow the local sponsor of the San Timoteo Creek Project to repay its 25 percent cost share to the Federal Government over a 30 year period instead of the traditional payment when construction begins. The generic authority to repay the local sponsor cost share over